humanity’s most important values, such as love for the fatherland and military culture. Moreover, bourgeois society embraces a peace culture, which is the attribute most hated by the militants. Even the MMA fights symbolize the fight against “the bourgeois man, against a type of man who’s afraid of everything, who doesn’t know how to fight anymore, who is frightened of risking his life to defend our civilization” (p. 61). Bourgeois values also relate to women, particularly those who display contempt for the militants and are only interested in men with expensive cars and clothes. This struggle against bourgeois society is a “noble action that makes individuals morally superior” (pg. 92), according to Sacrifice’s beliefs.

This book is full of descriptive detail about the militia’s activities and, more important, the beliefs that motivate those activities. The nagging question of how Orsini was able to infiltrate the militia cells is not answered until the final chapter, when he concludes that “the most effective way to fight violence is to get to know it” (p. 209). While it is beyond the scope of the book to offer other effective ways to fight violence, it does serve as a warning that there is a serious movement at the grassroots of society promoting Fascist values.

Reviewed by Christiane Olivo

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Civil War Logistics: A Study of Military Transportation by Earl J. Hess.


Aficionados of Civil War history will instantly recognize the name Earl J. Hess, the author of nearly twenty meticulously researched and clearly written books on various aspects of that conflict. Readers familiar with any of his previous works will not be disappointed with his latest effort.

In the preface to Civil War Logistics, Hess explains that the term “logistics” usually refers to the processes of obtaining supplies and “the transportation of men, material, food, and animals in support of military operations in the field” (p. xi). The author concentrates on the transportation aspect while mentioning the obtaining of supplies only in passing, as is his plan from the start. The book begins with a historical overview stretching back to classical times, which sets an excellent context for the development of military logistics prior to 1860. From there, the book
might be viewed as a series of nearly independent essays on the varied aspects of logistical transportation including the role of the quartermaster, river-based transportation, railroads, coastal shipping, wagons, pack trains, cattle herds, and “foot power.” The concluding chapters address troop transfers during the war and Confederate attempts to interrupt the different Federal logistics systems.

The size of the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War were each geometrically larger by many times than the total number of armed forces fielded by the United States in all of its conflicts up to that time. Hess estimates that during the final year of the war alone, from spring 1864 to spring 1865, Federal quartermasters moved almost four million people, 716,000 animals, and 9.5 million tons of freight. Given the enormity of the logistical requirements necessary to support these efforts, it is surprising that studies of this essential topic are few in number and limited in scope. Civil War Logistics fills this void quite well by examining both the Northern and Southern efforts in this series of essays that are comparative in nature and explain developments in both economic and cultural contexts.

Hess examines the economics of the various modes of transportation, comparing them in terms of cost, time, availability, and such variables as terrain, distance, and climate, as well as examining how unscrupulous owners at times attempted to swindle the government. It is sometimes said that the Confederacy “died of States’ Rights.” Hess illustrates how this was reflected in the Richmond government’s reluctance to interfere with state prerogatives to assert a centralized control of railroads and other transportation such as existed in the North. The author also does an excellent job explaining the problems inherent in moving massive quantities of people and freight and the managerial innovations developed by Union officials to meet the unprecedented need. In the process the reader also gains a much better understanding of the limitations that logistical transportation placed on army generals and how their strategic decisions were shaped by these considerations. In fact, anyone planning to write a campaign history in the future would be well advised to read the applicable portions of Civil War Logistics and consult the wealth of data on which Hess bases his conclusions.

As with any serious historical work, there are a few places where a better explanation would be helpful. For example, on page 70 while Hess is discussing the growth of railroads in the 1850s, he suggests that railroad expansion in the South has not been appreciated because it amounted to 392 percent growth during the decade while Northern
expansion was less at 325 percent. For this to have meaning, however, it would be necessary to have the actual numbers. If, as an illustration, the North had 3,000 miles of railroad in 1850 and constructed 500 additional miles the growth would be 16.7 percent. If the South began with 1,000 miles and constructed only 250 miles this growth would be 25 percent, yielding a skewed impression of the actual situation. Similarly, on page 206, Hess implies that Sherman could have unified his army with Grant’s outside Richmond earlier if he had used available transportation to transfer his men to Virginia rather than marching them through Georgia and the Carolinas. Of course, this ignores the strategic goals of Sherman’s campaigns—destroying the remaining Southern railroad network and manufacturing concerns, depriving the Confederacy of the use of Savannah for blockade runners, and deflating Southern morale.

For each of his chapters, Hess provides actual wartime examples and detailed data to support his statements. His extensive use of a breadth of primary archival sources, supplemented by secondary works, provides the same exceptional evidentiary support for which his works have long been recognized. The photographs are well chosen to illustrative the points made in the text. His work admirably fills the long-standing void for a comprehensive analysis of this vital component of Civil War planning.

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